



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/932,631	08/16/2001	Quintin T. Phillips	10007611-1	6321

7590 06/29/2006

HEWLETT-PACKARD COMPANY  
Intellectual Property Administration  
P.O. Box 272400  
Fort Collins, CO 80527-2400

EXAMINER

ROBINSON, MYLES D

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2625

DATE MAILED: 06/29/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 09/932,631	<b>Applicant(s)</b> PHILLIPS ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b> Myles D. Robinson	<b>Art Unit</b> 2625	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 March 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3 - 16, 24, 26 and 30 - 33 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3 - 16, 24, 26 and 30 - 33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 16 August 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>8/16/01</u> | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Information Disclosure Statement*

1. The examiner has considered the references listed in the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) submitted on 8/16/2001 (see attached PTO-1449).

### *Election/Restrictions*

2. **Claims 17 – 21, 23 and 28 – 29** are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in the reply filed on 3/21/2006.

### *Response to Amendment*

3. Applicant's amendment was received on 12/14/2005, and has been entered and made of record. Currently, **claims 1, 3 – 16, 24, 26 and 30 – 33** are pending.

### *Response to Arguments*

4. Applicant's arguments with respect to **claims 1, 3 – 16, 24, 26 and 30 – 33** have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground of rejection.

Regarding **claim 17 – 21, 23 and 28 – 29**, withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention; therefore, the Applicant's arguments are rendered moot in view of election.

Regarding **claim 1**, the Applicant argues that **Sekizawa et al.** (U.S. Patent No. 6,681,349) does not disclose, teach or suggest **outputting the message to indicate use of the consumable to be verified by an unauthorized party who is not authorized to use the consumable** (see *Remarks*, page 9, line 31 – page 10, line 3).

However in the new grounds of rejection, **Nagata** (U.S. Pre-Grant Application No. 2002/0077979) does disclose **outputting the message to indicate use of the consumable to be verified by an unauthorized party who is not authorized to use the consumable** (see *Fig. 34, step S45, paragraph 0387 wherein service provider is notified using various methods, paragraphs 0360 – 0362 wherein a service person is dispatched to notify contract signer 1 and to investigate the response to the analysis of the arithmetic processing section 122 and Fig. 83, step S56, paragraphs 1250 – 1252 wherein a message is displayed on the copier*).

Therefore, the Applicant's arguments regarding claim 1 are considered not persuasive. Please cite rationale of the grounds of rejection below for further explanation.

Regarding **claim 24**, the Applicant traverses Official Notice and demands evidence with respect to what the Examiner apparently relied upon as being well known (see *Remarks*, page 10, lines 20 – 28).

However in the new grounds of rejection, **Nagata** does disclose outputting the message to an owner of the respective consumable (see *Fig. 34, step S45, paragraph*

Art Unit: 2625

*0387 wherein service provider is notified using various methods, paragraphs 0360 – 0362 wherein a service person is dispatched to notify contract signer 1 and to investigate the response to the analysis of the arithmetic processing section 122 and Fig. 83, step S56, paragraphs 1250 – 1252 wherein a message is displayed on the copier).* In this instance, the proper party and the unauthorized party are one in the same because contract signer 1 used a duplicate consumable already registered with the service provider 10 (*paragraph 0361*) and then sends a service person is dispatched to notify contract signer 1 and to investigate the response to the analysis of the arithmetic processing section 122 (*paragraph 0362*).

Therefore, the Applicant's arguments regarding claim 24 are considered not persuasive. Please cite rationale of the grounds of rejection below for further explanation.

Regarding **claim 26**, the Applicant argues that **Sekizawa** does not disclose, teach or suggest comparing of the received consumable identifier before the comparing the received party identifier (see page 10, lines 29 – 32).

**Nagata** does disclose comparing the received consumable identifier and received party identifier (see *Figs. 1 and 4, arithmetic processing section 122, paragraphs 0360 – 0364*) but does not explicitly disclose comparing of the received consumable identifier before the comparing the received party identifier.

However, one of ordinary skill in the art, furthermore, would have expected Applicant's invention to perform equally well with comparing the received consumable

Art Unit: 2625

identifier occurs **after** comparing the received party identifier because the same effect will be achieved while reducing both processing time and power. For instance, one company will operate more than likely operate at least one or more consumables yet one consumable will not likely be operable amongst at least two or more companies; therefore, there are less database entries to search when a processor must sort through companies first than when a processor must sort through consumables first. Less processing time and power will be spent searching a database for the respective company first followed by searching for the consumable while achieving the same effective results.

Therefore, the Applicant's arguments regarding claim 26 are considered not persuasive. Please cite rationale of the grounds of rejection below for further explanation.

Regarding **claim 9**, the Applicant argues that **Sekizawa** does not disclose, teach or suggest **outputting the communication indicating the failure of the received party identifier to match the stored party identifier of the respective consumable** (see *Remarks*, page 11, lines 8 – 12).

However, **Nagata** does disclose **outputting the communication indicating the failure of the received party identifier to match the stored party identifier of the respective consumable** (see *Fig. 34, step S45, paragraph 0387 wherein service provider is notified using various methods, paragraphs 0360 – 0362 wherein a service person is dispatched to notify contract signer 1 and to investigate the response to the*

*analysis of the arithmetic processing section 122 and Fig. 83, step S56, paragraphs 1250 – 1252 wherein a message is displayed on the copier).* Therefore, the Applicant's arguments regarding claim 9 are considered not persuasive. Please cite rationale of the grounds of rejection below for further explanation.

### ***Claim Objections***

5. The following quotation of 37 CFR 1.75(a) is the basis of the objection:
  - (a) The specification must conclude with a claim particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention or discovery.
6. **Claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12, 14 and 33** are objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(a) as failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention or discovery.

Claims 1 and 9 recite the limitation "an image forming device" in lines 4 and 3, respectively, within each of the claims, and the limitation "an image forming device" is recited in the following dependent claims in their respective lines: **Claim 3** (line 2 of the claim), **Claim 4** (line 3 of the claim), **Claim 6** (line 5 of the claim), **Claim 11** (line 3 of the claim), **Claim 12** (line 3 of the claim), **Claim 14** (line 6 of the claim) and **Claim 33** (line 4 of the claim).

The applicant has failed to particularly point out and distinctly claim if the applicant is referring to the same, instant "image forming device" or a unique and distinctly different "image forming device" within the claim. All claims dependent upon these claims suffer the same deficiency and, therefore, are objected to as well.

Appropriate correction is required.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

7. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

8. ***Claims 1, 3 – 16, 24, 30, 32 and 33*** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by **Nagata** (U.S. Pre-Grant Application No. 2002/0077979).

Referring to **claim 9**, Nagata discloses a consumable monitoring system (see *Figs. 1, 3 and 4, service provider 10*) comprising:

a database (see *Figs. 1 and 4, memory section 124, paragraphs 0278 and 0279*) configured to store information regarding a plurality of consumables (see *Figs. 9 – 12, paragraphs 0317 – 0320 wherein tables stored in memory section 124 and processed by arithmetic processing section 122 which includes cartridge type with respective unique IDs for a plurality of cartridges and Fig. 33, steps S21, S24, S27, paragraphs 0293 – 0295, 0321, 0323, 0326, 0327, 0330 and 0331 wherein service provider 10 collects and stores unique cartridge IDs*) usable by an image forming device to form hard images (see *Figs. 1, 3 and 4, image forming apparatus 2, toner cartridge 60, paragraph 0255*), wherein the stored information for an individual one of the consumables includes a stored consumable identifier (see *Figs. 9 – 12,, Table 3, paragraphs 0256, 0265, 0269, 0270, 0278 – 0279, 0282 – 0285 and 0368*) which



Art Unit: 2625

identifies the respective consumable, and a stored party identifier utilized to identify a proper party associated with the respective consumable (see Fig. 10(b,) paragraphs 0278 – 0279, 0282 – 0285 and 0367),

an interface (see Figs. 1, 3 and 4 wherein contract signer 1 comprising imaging apparatus 2 communicates via network 20 [telephone line 20A] to service provider 10 comprising terminal 12, paragraphs 0286 – 0287) adapted to receive information regarding a consumable to be verified including a received consumable identifier which identifies the consumable to be verified and a received party identifier utilized to identify the proper party associated with the consumable to be verified (see Fig. 34, step S30, paragraph 0366 wherein the contract signer ID, i.e. party identifier, and the unique identifier of cartridge 60 are received at terminal 12),

processing circuitry (see Figs. 1 and 4, arithmetic processing section 122, paragraphs 0360 – 0364) configured to compare the received consumable identifier with the stored consumable identifiers (see Fig. 34, step S32, paragraphs 0368) and to compare the received party identifier with the stored party identifier **of a respective one of the consumables corresponding to the received consumable identifier** (see Fig. 34, step S31, paragraph 0367), and

wherein the processing circuitry is configured to control outputting of a communication responsive to the received party identifier not matching the stored party **identifier of the respective consumable and wherein the communication indicates the failure of the received party identifier to match the stored party identifier of the respective consumable** (see Fig. 34, step S45, paragraph 0387 wherein service

Art Unit: 2625

*provider is notified using various methods, paragraphs 0360 – 0362 wherein a service person is dispatched to notify contract signer 1 and to investigate the response to the analysis of the arithmetic processing section 122 and Fig. 83, step S56, paragraphs 1250 – 1252 wherein a message is displayed on the copier).*

Referring to **claim 10**, Nagata discloses the system further wherein the processing circuitry is configured to forward a message to the proper party associated with the respective consumable responsive to the comparisons (see *Fig. 34, step S45, paragraph 0387 wherein service provider is notified using various methods, paragraphs 0360 – 0362 wherein a service person is dispatched to notify contract signer 1 and to investigate the response to the analysis of the arithmetic processing section 122 and Fig. 83, step S56, paragraphs 1250 – 1252 wherein a message is displayed on the copier*). In this instance, the proper party and the unauthorized party are one in the same because contract signer 1 used a duplicate consumable already registered with the service provider 10 (*paragraph 0361*) and then sends a service person is dispatched to notify contract signer 1 and to investigate the response to the analysis of the arithmetic processing section 122 (*paragraph 0362*).

Referring to **claim 11**, Nagata discloses the system further wherein the processing circuitry is configured to forward the communication comprising a command to disable at least one operation of an image forming device coupled with the consumable to be verified responsive to the comparison (see *Figs. 83 and 84 wherein controller section 3 requests permission from terminal station 12 in step S54, arithmetic processing section receives and analyzes request in step S64 then transmits a*

Art Unit: 2625

*disablement command in step S66 and cartridge 60 is disabled in step S56, paragraphs 1236, 1237, 1248, 1250 – 1254, 1261, 1263 and 1264).*

Referring to **claim 12**, Nagata discloses the system further wherein the processing circuitry is configured to forward a warning message to an image forming device coupled with the consumable to be verified responsive to the comparison (*paragraphs 0360 – 0362 wherein a service person is dispatched to notify contract signer 1 and to investigate the response to the analysis of the arithmetic processing section 122 and Fig. 83, step S56, paragraphs 1250 – 1252 wherein a message is displayed on the copier).*

Referring to **claim 13**, Nagata discloses the system further comprising a memory device (*see Figs. 1 and 4, memory section 124*), and wherein the processing circuitry is configured to forward the received consumable identifier, the received party identifier, and date and time information regarding the reception of the received consumable identifier and the received party identifier to the memory device for storage (*see Figs. 9 – 12 wherein date of reception and installation are recorded and displayed in tables, paragraphs 0317 – 0320 wherein tables stored in memory section 124 and processed by arithmetic processing section 122 which includes cartridge type with respective unique IDs for a plurality of cartridges, Fig. 33, steps S21, S24, S27, paragraphs 0293 – 0295, 0321, 0323, 0326, 0327, 0330 and 0331 wherein service provider 10 collects and stores unique cartridge IDs and paragraphs 0278 and 0279 wherein contract signer and product IDs).*

Referring to **claim 14**, Nagata discloses the system further wherein the interface is adapted to receive the information regarding the consumable to be verified including the received party identifier comprising a received device identifier (*see Table 1, paragraph 0256, 0268*) which identifies the image forming device which communicated the information and wherein the database is configured to store the stored party **identifiers** comprising at least one stored device identifier which identifies an image forming device associated with the proper party for the respective consumable and wherein the processing circuitry is configured to compare the received device identifier with the stored device identifier to compare the received party identifier with the stored party identifier (*see Figs. 1, 3 and 4 wherein contract signer 1 comprising imaging apparatus 2 communicates via network 20 [telephone line 20A] to service provider 10 comprising terminal 12, paragraphs 0286 – 0287 and Figs. 9 – 12 wherein model data of the respective image forming apparatus 2 is recorded and displayed in tables, paragraphs 0289 – 0291*).

Referring to **claim 15**, Nagata discloses the system further wherein the database is configured to store the stored party identifier comprising a plurality of stored device **identifiers** which identify a plurality of image forming devices associated with the proper party of the respective consumable (*see Figs. 1 and 4, memory section 124, paragraphs 0278, 0279, Figs. 9 – 12 wherein a plurality of model IDs correspond with a plurality of image forming apparatuses 1*), and wherein the processing circuitry is configured to compare the **party identifier comprising a** received device identifier with

Art Unit: 2625

the stored device identifiers (see *Figs. 1 and 4, arithmetic processing section 122, paragraphs 0360 – 0364*).

Referring to **claim 16**, Nagata discloses the system further wherein the interface is adapted to receive the information regarding the consumable to be verified including the received party identifier which directly identifies the proper party of the respective consumable (see *Figs. 1, 3 and 4 wherein contract signer 1 comprising imaging apparatus 2 communicates via network 20 [telephone line 20A] to service provider 10 comprising terminal 12, paragraphs 0286 – 0287, Fig. 34, step S31, paragraph 0367 wherein the identify of the proper party is already stored in memory section 124 and is used to make the comparison in step S31 and paragraphs 0282 – 0285 wherein the ID of contract signer 1 comprises a company name, company address and unique ID number such that contract signer 1 can be directly contacted and billed*).

Referring to **claims 1, 24 and 3 – 8**, the rationale provided in the rejections of claims 9 – 16, respectively, are incorporated herein. In addition, the systems of claims 9 – 16 perform the methods of claims 1, 24 and 3 – 8, respectively.

Referring to **claim 32**, Nagata discloses the system further wherein the communication indicates use of the consumable to be verified by an unauthorized party (see *Fig. 34, step S45, paragraph 0387 wherein service provider is notified using various methods, paragraphs 0360 – 0362 wherein a service person is dispatched to notify contract signer 1 and to investigate the response to the analysis of the arithmetic processing section 122 and Fig. 83, step S56, paragraphs 1250 – 1252 wherein a message is displayed on the copier*).

Referring to **claim 30**, the rationale provided in the rejection of claim 32 is incorporated herein. In addition, the message indicating the failure of the received party identifier to match any stored party identifier associated with the consumable within claim 30 is equivalent to the communication indicating use of the consumable by an unauthorized party within claim 32 because a successful match of the received and the stored party identifiers would indicate that the consumable is being used by an authorized party.

Referring to **claim 33**, Nagata discloses the system further wherein the processing circuitry is configured to address the communication for communication to the proper party (see *Fig. 34, step S45, paragraph 0387 wherein service provider is notified using various methods, paragraphs 0360 – 0362 wherein a service person is dispatched to notify contract signer 1 and to investigate the response to the analysis of the arithmetic processing section 122 and Fig. 83, step S56, paragraphs 1250 – 1252 wherein a message is displayed on the copier*) and to control outputting of another communication (see *Figs. 83 and 84 wherein controller section 3 requests permission from terminal station 12 in step S54, arithmetic processing section receives and analyzes request in step S64 then transmits a disablement command in step S66 and cartridge 60 is disabled in step S56, paragraphs 1236, 1237, 1248, 1250 – 1254, 1261, 1263 and 1264*) comprising a warning message of unauthorized use to an image forming device coupled with the consumable to be verified (see *Fig. 34, step S45, paragraph 0387 wherein service provider is notified using various methods and Fig. 83, step S56, paragraphs 1250 – 1252 wherein a message is displayed on the copier*). In

Art Unit: 2625

this instance, the proper party and the unauthorized party are one in the same because contract signer 1 used a duplicate consumable already registered with the service provider 10 (*paragraph 0361*) and then sends a service person is dispatched to notify contract signer 1 and to investigate the response to the analysis of the arithmetic processing section 122 (*paragraph 0362*).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

9. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

10. ***Claims 26 and 31*** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Nagata** (U.S. Pre-Grant Application No. 2002/0077979).

Referring to **claim 26**, Nagata discloses the method further wherein the **outputting** comprises **outputting** the message responsive to the received consumable identifier matching at least one of the stored consumable identifiers and the received party identifier failing to match a stored party identifier of the respective consumable associated with the at least one stored consumable identifier (*see Figs. 1 and 4, output section 125, paragraph 0280 and Figs. 10 and 34, step S31, paragraphs 0361 and 0367 wherein arithmetic processing section 122 detects stored contract signer ID table and causes output section 125 to display the retrieved space cartridge table as necessary*)

but does not explicitly disclose the system further wherein the **comparing the received consumable identifier occurs before comparing the received party identifier**.

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to include/modify **comparing the received consumable identifier occurs before comparing the received party identifier**. The Applicant has not disclosed that **comparing the received consumable identifier occurs before comparing the received party identifier** provides an advantage, is used for a particular purpose, or solves a stated problem. One of ordinary skill in the art, furthermore, would have expected Applicant's invention to perform equally well with comparing the received consumable identifier occurs **after** comparing the received party identifier because the same effect will be achieved while reducing both processing time and power. For instance, one company will operate more than likely operate at least one or more consumables yet one consumable will not likely be operable amongst at least two or more companies; therefore, there are less database entries to search when a processor must sort through companies first than when a processor must sort through consumables first. Less processing time and power will be spent searching a database for the respective company first followed by searching for the consumable while achieving the same effective results.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in this art to modify **comparing the received consumable identifier occurs before comparing the received party identifier** to obtain the invention as specified in claim 26.



Referring to **claim 31**, Nagata discloses the method further comprising, using the received consumable identifier, identifying the at least one stored party identifier to be used for the comparing with the received party identifier (*see Figs. 1 and 4, output section 125, paragraph 0280 and Figs. 10 and 34, step S31, paragraphs 0361 and 0367 wherein arithmetic processing section 122 detects stored contract signer ID table and causes output section 125 to display the retrieved space cartridge table as necessary*).

### **Conclusion**

11. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

**Walker et al.** (U.S. Pre-Grant Publication No. 2001/0019343) disclose a method and apparatus for product regionalization.

**Walker** (U.S. Patent No. 6,312,106) discloses a method and apparatus for transferring information between a replaceable consumable and a printing device.

**Yoshizawa** (U.S. Pre-Grant Publication No. 2005/0213997) discloses a system, apparatus and method for preventing access to information stored in a consumable item of an image forming apparatus.

**Takeuchi** (Japanese Patent No. 2003-076230) discloses an image forming apparatus capable of judging a cartridge as the unusable one even when the used cartridge is illicitly obtained and repacked with content so as to be sold.

**Ward et al.** (U.S. Pre-Grant Publication No. 2005/0243118 and 2005/0243116) disclose consumable cartridge theft deterrence apparatus and methods.

Art Unit: 2625

**Hohberger et al.** (U.S. Pre-Grant Publication No. 2003/0059050) disclose a method and apparatus for article authentication.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Myles D. Robinson whose telephone number is (571) 272-5944. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30am-5:00pm.

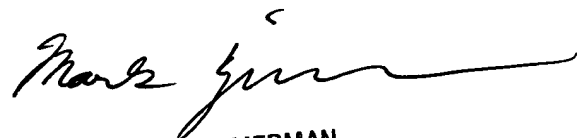
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Twyler M. Lamb can be reached on (571) 272-7406. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



MDR

6/22/06



MARK ZIMMERMAN  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600